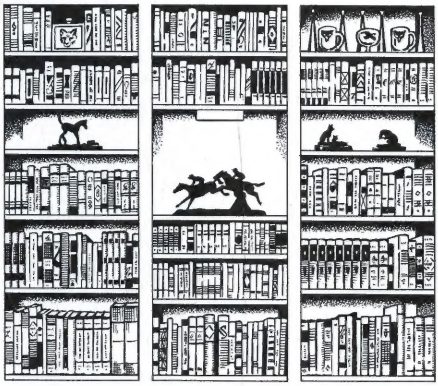
Cass



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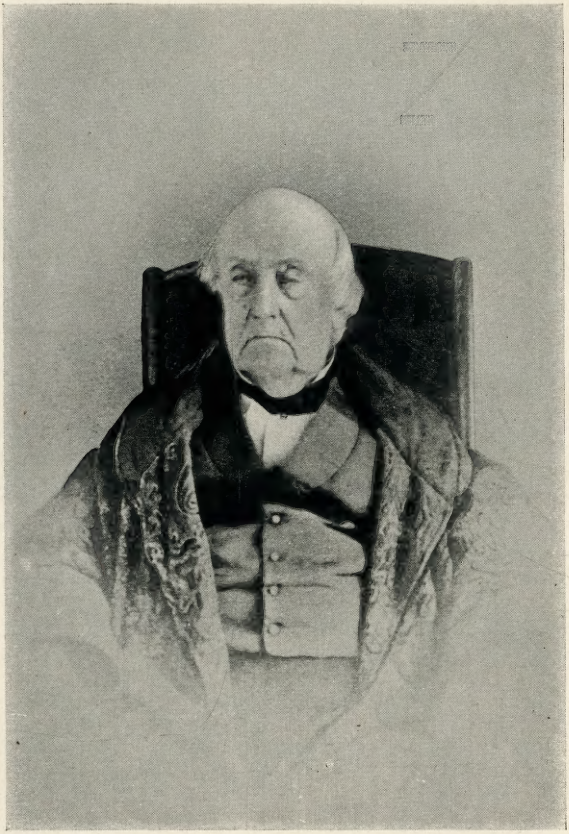

General Lewis Cass

1782–1866

Privately printed
1916

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BY FRANK GRAY GRISWOLD

In looking through a box of old papers belonging to my great grandfather General Lewis Cass I found the following letters which I feel it a duty as well as a pleasure to publish as I believe them to be of great historical value.

The letter from General Andrew Jackson and the second letter from President James Buchanan are printed from copies in the handwriting of General Cass's daughter — my grandmother — Mary Canfield.

CASS CANFIELD

Cassleigh,
Roslyn,
June 1, 1916

PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED
AT A MEETING OF THE NEW YORK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Held in its Hall on Tuesday Evening,
June 19, 1866

THE *following preamble and resolutions were adopted unanimously:*

On Sunday, the seventeenth day of June, 1866, Lewis Cass died at Detroit, in Michigan in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He was born in New Hampshire, in 1782, and when twenty years old was admitted to the practice of the Law in Ohio; to the Legislature of which State he was soon after elected. When our war with Great Britain broke out, in 1812, Cass was chosen to be Colonel of a Regiment of Ohio Volunteers and bravely commanded the first American detachment which invaded Canada. Soon afterwards he was appointed Colonel, and then Brigadier General — in the Regular Army of the United States. At the end of that War General Cass was commissioned to be Governor of the vast territory of Michi-

gan. For the next ten years he was occupied in administering its chaotic affairs, in treating with its Indian tribes, and in exploring its Northwestern wilds, near Lake Superior and the Upper Mississippi. This conspicuous ability caused him to be selected as Secretary of War in 1831, by President Jackson, who, in 1836, appointed him to be Minister of our Country in France. This station General Cass dignified until 1842; when he distinguished himself as an American by baffling the attempt of Great Britain, to be allowed to search at her pleasure, all the vessels of other nations which might dare to navigate the open ocean. On his return home, Cass was elected to the National Senate by the State of Michigan; and in 1848, he was nominated to the Presidency of the United States.

After the election of General Zachary Taylor, Lewis Cass was again returned to the Senate of our Republic, where he remained until the end of the adminis-

tration of President Pierce. Having been appointed in 1857 by President Buchanan, to be Secertary of State, General Cass held that office until 1860, when he voluntarily resigned it, and became, once more, a private citizen of the United States, after nearly fifty years spent in the service of the nation.

During his long and varied career of official duty Lewis Cass was always earnestly interested in the scholarship of his country: — especially in everything concerning its history, and more particularly in the department which relates to its aboriginal owners. To his active friendship towards its commissioned Agent, our own State of New York is largely indebted for the rich collection of documents, gleaned from the French Archives, which now illustrate its colonial History. A sincere and unostentatious Christian this venerable patriot and Statesman now rests from his labors of more than four score years, and is at peace.

Be it therefore RESOLVED That in the death of General Lewis Cass the New York Historical Society loses one of its most worthy and most eminent associates:—and that while in common with our whole country, the Society sincerely mourns his decease, it quietly accords the sterling patriotism, official ability, scholarly zeal, and untarnished private character, which illustrates his lengthened days.

Resolved, that an Authenticated copy of these minutes be communicated to the family of General Cass.

Extract from the minutes

ANDREW WARNER

Recording Secretary

Letter from
Mr. Lewis Cass
Member of the Ohio Legislature
to His Wife
1806

In reference to Colonel Aaron Burr and Blennerhassett

Chillicothe, Dec. 6, 1806

MY DEAREST LOVE:

After a disagreeable journey I have arrived at this place and commenced the business of legislation. I am already growing weary, and am anxious to return to her, who alone is present before me. We have been engaged in business, which is very important to Mr. Blennerhassett, and as you will be somewhat anxious I will relate it to you. The plan of Col. Burr is finally and completely develloped. We have received a private communication from the Governor informing us, that Mr. Burr's plan is to collect about 1300 men, to rendezvous at the mouth of red river and to proceed from there to Orleans, to attack the city, to seize upon the bank and treasury, and upon the artillery and to form an independent government under the protection of Spain. This plan has

been communicated to Mr. Harrison by Mr. Blennerhassett, and Mr. Harrison has proceeded to Washington, with the information. We have passed a law, which I draughted, empowering the governor to stop the boats now building, and all others provided for that purpose, and seize all persons concerned. This letter will be carried by a messenger dispatched by the Governor to arrest Mr. Blennerhassett and stop his boats.

A singular circumstance has made me acquainted with a member from the County of Trumbull, who is the man who conducted Mr. Wilson from New Connecticut to Steubenville in his crazy expedition. He informs me that he was standing in his door, and saw a man pass, whose appearance struck him as somewhat singular. He was soon summoned by the adjacent tavern keeper to examine him. He went and found Mr. Wilson just coming to himself. He appeared to be perfectly in amazement to find himself in that Country, and

related to him these circumstances, which he was able to recollect. As it is now late I will take some other opportunity to communicate to you the whole of the conversation.

I wish you would write me as often as possible. Tell me your whole thoughts, and how you do. Do you think of me as often as I do of you? I don't think that anything will induce me to leave you again. I will write you regularly every week and give you an account of our proceedings.

Remember me affectionately to your mother and the family, and God grant that no untoward accident may befall you, and that I may soon again see you is the sincere wish of him

who will ever be
your affectionate
L. Cass

Letter from President James Monroe (1817–25)

1817

General Lewis Cass was appointed Governor of the Territory of Michigan by President James Monroe in 1822. John Quincy Adams being Secretary of State. He was reappointed to this office in 1828 by President John Quincy Adams — Henry Clay Secretary of State

Washington
Dec. 2, 1817

Dear Sir

I enclose you a copy of my message to Congress of this day. You will find that I have noticed some subjects, to which you cannot be indifferent, and that if the views I have taken of them were not suggested by what I saw, in my late tour, they were strengthened by it.

I hope that you, and Genl McComb, have enjoyed good health since we parted, & that your families are equally fortunate. I found mine in delicate health, that is, Mrs. Monroe & our daughter Mrs. Hay. Their health has improved of late.

How are Dr. Delavan and the other gentlemen of our party from Detroit?

with great respect and sincere regards I am dear sir

very sincerely yours,
James Monroe

Give to Genl McComb, the purport of the message.

Washington
Dec 2. 1817

Dear Sir

I enclose you a copy of my message to Congress of this day. You will find that I have noticed some subjects, to which you can not be indifferent, and that if the views I have taken of them were not suggested by what I saw, in my late tour, they were strengthened by it.

I hope that you, and your Mc-Comb, have enjoyed good health since we parted, & that your families are equally fortunate. I found mine in delicate health, that is, Mrs

Monroe

& our daughter Mrs May. Her
health has improved of late.
How are Dr Delavan, and the
other gentlemen of our party
from Detroit?
with great respect and for
our regard I am dear Sir
very sincerely yours.
James Monroe
Gen. to Gen. McComb, the
present of the Missr.

Letter from
Louis Philippe
King of France (1830–1848)

1838

General Lewis Cass was at this time Minister to France (1836–42) having been appointed by President Andrew Jackson

Neuilly, 13th July 1838

My Dear General,

I return with many thanks the letter you were so good as to leave for me with General d'Houdetor. I have also to thank M^r^. Lewis, since the contents of his letter gave me such satisfaction that I red it over to the Queen & to my family. The general suffrage of the American Nation in favor of my son, is very gratifying to us. I only regret that he could not stay longer in America, but I will send him there again. In the first place, to express his gratitude & mine for the attentions of which he has been the object, & also to express the high sense I entertain of the recollections kept of me in America, & which were so kindly manifested to my son, & in the next place, My Dear General, because my own experience has taught me that America & England are

good schools; & that much may be learnt in that intercourse, which could not be acquired elsewhere.

Believe me, Sir, very sincerely
Your Affectionate
Louis Philippe

General Cass, &c, &c, &c.

Neuilly, 13th July 1838.

My Dear General.

I return with many thanks the letter you were so good as to leave for me with General d'Houdetot. I have also to thank Mr. Lewis, since the contents of his letter, gave me such satisfaction that I red it over to the Queen & to my family. The general suffrage of the American Nation in favor of my son, is very gratifying to us. I only regret that he could not stay longer in America, but I will send him there again. In the first place

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Your affectionate

General Cass, &c. &c. &c. — Louis Philippe

Letter from
General Andrew Jackson
President (1829–1837)

1843

General Lewis Cass had been Secretary of War (1831) during President Jackson's administration

Hermitage, July 8th, 1843

My dear Sir:

I have the pleasure to acknowledge your very friendly letter of the 26th May last. It reached me in due course of mail, and such has been my debility and afflictions, that prevented me from the power of acknowledging it until now, — and even now it is with great difficulty I write.

In return for those kind expressions with regard to myself, I have to remark that I shall ever recollect my dear General, with great satisfaction, the relations, both *private* and *official* which subsisted between us during the greater part of my administration. Having full confidence in your abilities and republican principles I invited you to my Cabinet, and I never can forget with what discretion and talents you met those great and delicate questions which were brought before you whilst

you Presided over the Department of War which entitled you to my thanks and will be ever recollected with the most lively feelings of friendship by me. But what has endeared you to every true American was the noble stand you took as our Minister at Paris against the Quintuple Treaty, and by your talents, energy and fearless responsibility defeated its ratification by France — a treaty intended by Great Britain, to change our international laws and make her mistress of the seas, and destroy the national independence, not only of our nation but all Europe, and become the tyrant on every ocean. Had Great Britain obtained the sanction of France to this treaty, with the late disgraceful treaty of Washington so disgraceful to our national character, and injurious to our national safety in war &c &c then, indeed we might have hung our harps upon the willows and resigned our national independence to Great Britain. But to your talents, energy, and fearless respon-

sibility we are indebted for the shield you threw over us from the impending danger [which] the ratification by France would have brought upon us. For this act of yours the thanks of every true American is yours, and the applause of every true republican; and for this noble act I tender you my thanks.

I admired the course of Dr. Limo in the Senate, last Congress in urging his Oregon Bill, and I hope his energy will carry it into a law next Session of Congress. This will speak to England a language that she will understand, that we will not submit to be negotiated out of our territorial rights, hereafter.

I hope your amiable family have united with [you] to whom please present the kind salutations of me and mine and receive for yourself assurance of my friendship and esteem.

ANDREW JACKSON

To the HON. LEWIS CASS

Letter from
President James Buchanan
(1857–1861)
1857

Wheatland 21 February 1857

My dear Sir —

It affords me great pleasure to tender to you the appointment of Secretary of State. This it was my desire to do from the beginning, & I have only doubted in consideration of your age. I am happy, however, to learn from the most authentic sources that you are now as capable of mental labor & physical exertion as you were ten years ago. May Heaven grant you a long continuance of these blessings! I shall be happy to learn your willingness to accept this appointment; and in that event entertain not a doubt that we shall act together for the public good in peace, harmony & friendship.

By this mail I shall offer the Treasury Department to our friend Cobb.

from your friend
very respectfully
James Buchanan

Hon: Lewis Cass

Wheatland 21 February 1857

My dear Sir,

It affords me great pleasure to tender to you the appointment of Secretary of State. Since it was my desire to be from the beginning, & I have only doubted in consideration of your age. I am happy however, to learn from the most authentic sources that you are now as capable of mental labor & physical exertion as you were ten years ago. May Heaven grant you a long continuance of these blessings! I shall be happy to learn your willingness to accept this appointment; & do not entertain not a doubt that we shall act together for the public good in peace, harmony & friendship.

By this mail I shall offer the Secretary's Department to our friend Cass.

Yours sincerely & respectfully

Hon. Lewis Cass

James Buchanan

Letter from
General Lewis Cass
to
President Buchanan
1860

Resignation as Secretary of State

Department of State

Dec. 12, 1860

Sir:

The present alarming crisis in our National affairs has engaged your serious consideration, and in your recent message you have expressed to Congress, and through Congress to the Country, the views you have formed respecting the questions fraught with the most momentous consequences, which are now presented to the American people for solution. With the general principles laid down in that message, I fully concur, and I appreciate, with warm sympathy, its patriotic appeals and suggestions. What measures it is competent and proper for the Executive to adopt, under existing circumstances, is a subject which has received your most careful attention, and with the anxious hope, as I well know from having partici-

pated in the deliberations, that tranquility and good feeling may be speedily restored to this agitated and divided confederacy.

In some points, which I deem of vital importance, it has been my misfortune to differ from you.

It has been my decided opinion, which, for sometime past, I have urged at various meetings of the Cabinet that additional troops should be sent to reinforce the forts in the harbor of Charleston, with a view to their better defence should they be attacked, and that an armed vessel should likewise be ordered there, to aid if necessary, in the defence and also should it be required in the collection of the revenue, and it is yet my opinion that these measures should be adopted without the least delay. I have likewise urged the expediency of immediately removing the Custom House at Charleston to one of the forts in the port, and of making arrangements for the collection of the duties there by having a collector and other officers ready to act

when necessary so that when the office may become vacant the proper authority may be there to collect the duties on the part of the United States. I continue to think that these arrangements should be immediately made. While the right and the responsibility of deciding belong to you, it is very desirable that at this perilous juncture there should be as far as possible unanimity in your Councils with a view to safe and efficient action.

I have therefore felt it my duty to tender you my resignation of the office of Secretary of State, and want your permission to retire from that official association with yourself and the members of your Cabinet which I have enjoyed during almost four years without the occurrence of a single incident to interrupt the personal intercourse which has so happily existed.

I cannot close this letter without bearing my testimony to the zealous and earnest devotion to the best interests of the Country with which during a term of

unexampled trials and troubles you have sought to discharge the duties of your high station.

Thanking you for the kindness and confidence you have not ceased to manifest toward me, and with the expression of my warmest regard both for yourself and the gentlemen of your Cabinet, I am,

With great respect,
Your Obedient Servant.
L. Cass.

To the President
of the United States

Letter from President Buchanan to General Lewis Cass 1860

Washington, Dec. 15–16, 1860

SIR:

I have received your resignation of the office of Secretary of State with surprise and regret. After we had passed through nearly the whole term of the Administration with cordial friendship and regard, I had cherished the earnest hope that nothing might seem to disturb our official relations until the end. You have decided differently, and I have no right to complain. I must express my gratification at your concurrence with the general principles laid down in my message, and your appreciation with warm sympathy of its patriotic appeals and suggestions. This, I value very highly, and I rejoice that we concur in the opinion that Congress do not possess the power under the Constitution to coerce a State by force of arms to remain in the Confederacy.

The question on which we unfortunately differ is, that of ordering a detachment of the Army and Navy, to Charleston, as is correctly stated in your letter of resignation. I do not intend to argue this question. Suffice it to say that your remarks were heard by myself and the Cabinet with all the respect due to your high position, your long experience and your unblemished character, but they failed to convince us of the necessity and propriety, under existing circumstances of adopting such a measure. The Secretary of War and of the Navy, through whom, the orders must have been issued to re-inforce the forts, did not concur in your views, and whilst the whole responsibility for the refusal rested upon myself they were the members of the Cabinet, most directly interested. You may have judged correctly on this important question, and your opinion is entitled to great consideration, but under my convictions of duty, and believing as I do, that no present necessity

The President of the United States
and Mrs. Washington request the Pleasure of

_____

Company to Dine, on _____ next, at _____ o'Clock.

_____ 179

An answer is requested.

Printed from the Original engraved Copper plate
belonging, and used by Genl. Washington during
his Residency, and presented to the Hon. Lewis
Case, with the respects of the undersigned

Doylestown Bucks Co
June 12th 1855

Wm. Case

exists for a resort to force for the protection of the public property, it was impossible for me to have risked a collision of arms in the harbor of Charleston and thereby have defeated the reasonable hopes, which I cherish of the final triumph of the Union, and the Constitution.

I have only to add that you will take with you into retirement my best wishes that the evening of your days may be prosperous and happy. I remain, &c &c.

JAMES BUCHANAN

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